

SERVING BEER

PURPOSE: Serving a perfect glass of beer depends on three things: the condition of the glass, the way the beer is poured, and the temperature of the beer. This guide teaches bar staff the technique of serving the **“perfect beer.”**

SCOPE: This guide applies to all beverage service staff that serve draft and bottled beers. A perfectly poured glass of beer is a thing of beauty to a thirsty customer, and if poured correctly, it is usually a good indication that a second beer is not far off. Pouring and serving beer is art not just a job. Serving beer properly is satisfying to the customer and will increase sales.

GENERAL: ∴ The glass, first key to perfection, must be **"beer-clean;"** that is, grease-free, film-free, and lint-free. The second key to a perfect glass of beer is the way you pour it. A good **head** is a collar of firm, dense foam reaching slightly above the top of the glass. Temperature is the third key to a perfect glass of beer. A beer that tastes right to the typical customer is served at about 40 degrees. A beer that is cared for properly, served with a modest head at the proper temperature, will separate you from your competition

GUIDANCE:

The "Beer-Clean" Glass

The **"beer-clean"** glass is a glass that is grease-free, film-free, and lint-free. Any grease, oil, fat, or foreign substance, visible or invisible, will spoil the head on the beer. A dense, firm head of foam will deflate and break up, leaving large bubbles. The body of the beer will also lose carbonation. A less than clean glass can also cause an off-taste or an off-odor. A beer-clean glass, on the other hand, will leave foam in rings on the sides of the glass. The taste will stay fresh and zesty all the way down to the bottom.

The ideal solution to the beer-clean glass is a special glasswasher at the bar in which nothing but glasses are washed using a special fat-free washing agent. If you do not have a glasswasher, you can produce a beer-clean glass by following these steps very carefully:

- Using a special fat-free washing agent and hot water in your wash tank, submerge the whole glass and thoroughly brush the inside and rim. Empty the glass of all wash water.
- In the rinse sink, in clean hot water, running water if possible, immerse the glass bottom, down end first, to be sure you will fill it completely. Swish it around or rotate it, then empty.
- In the sanitizing sink, repeat the rinsing procedure.
- Turn the glass upside down on a clean rack or corrugated drainboard, so that there is free access of air. Do not place the glass on a towel or rubber mat or any flat surface, and do not dry it with a towel.

The “Head” on Draft Beer

In serving beer from a can or a bottle, you can produce a good head by reversing the tilting procedure: You place the glass upright and tilt the can or bottle instead. You should open the container in the customer's presence to show you are serving what the customer ordered. Then, proceed as follows:

- Pour the beer straight into the center of the wet glass with the container at a steep angle so the beer gurgles out.
- When it creates a fine-textured head of some substance, lower the angle, and fill the glass slowly until the foam rises to just above the lip.
- Wipe the bottle/can and set it beside the glass on a coaster or napkin.

The "Head" on Can and Bottled Beers

A good **"head"** is a collar of firm, dense foam reaching slightly above the rim of the glass, 1/2-inch to 1-inch thick depending on what pleases the customer. If the head is too thick, customers may feel cheated, and rightfully so. The more foam, the less beer in the glass. The size of the head depends on two things, the angle at which you hold the glass while pouring and how long you hold the angle. Rinse a beer-clean glass in fresh cold water and follow these steps:

- Hold the glass at a 45 degree angle about an inch below the tap, and open the tap all the way, when the head has risen a little higher than the rim of the glass, close the tap.
- When it is about half full, straighten the glass upright and let the beer pour right down the middle, still keeping the tap wide open.

Temperature

A beer that tastes right is served at 40 degrees Fahrenheit. If beer is served in a thin glass at room temperature, the beer temperature will rise. If served in a heavy glass such as a thick mug, goblet, or schooner, it will remain colder for a longer period of time. Beer mugs are the preferred choice by customers. Frosted glasses or mugs for beer are in fashion, especially in warm climates. To some extent, the freezer-frosted glasses are a merchandising technique: they spark interest and underscore beer's cooling, thirst-quenching character. They also keep the beer cold longer. But some people don't like them. If they make the beer too cold, the taste buds will perceive less flavor. Refrigerated glasses may be an alternative. Regardless, customers may have a preference. Make sure that service staff are aware that if the customer specifies a specific type of glass, serve the beer in the glass that is requested. It's a good idea to offer, frosted, refrigerated and room temperature glasses to satisfy all preferences. Beers have been around for a long time and will be around for a long time to come. So, remember a beer that has been properly served, with a modest head at the proper temperature, will probably call for another. Let's make sure that we serve it properly and correctly.

SUMMARY:

The glass, the head, and the temperature are the critical elements of serving beer. Its four main ingredients, malted grain, hops, water, and yeast, produce a lively, refreshing carbonated beverage with a short life span and a need for tender loving care. Remember the three elements: *the condition of the glass, the way the beer is poured, and the temperature* every time you serve the "perfect" beer in your operation. Serving beer is really an art